

REMARKS:

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-19. Claims 1, 9, 17 and 19 are amended herein, and new claim 20 is added. No new matter is presented.

Thus, claims 1-20 are pending and under consideration. The rejections are traversed below.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a):

Claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,385,758 (Kikuchi) and U.S. Patent No. 6,910,200 (Aubel) in further view of U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0127479 (Pierrat).

Kikuchi does not teach or suggest "a calculation device to obtain contour information for the plurality of components based on a component contour from the storage device that corresponds to each component indicated as the plurality of components and calculating a contour of a component region for collectively arranging the plurality of components using the obtained contour information and the indicated layout distance" as recited in claim 1. See also claims 9, 17 and 19 reciting similar features.

Kikuchi discusses maintaining a positional relationship between components in longitudinal and lateral directions by determining a limit moving distance within which one of the adjacent component terminals is allowed to move towards the other adjacent component terminal to uniformly compress the components (see, col. 4, lines 49-54 and Fig. 9 including corresponding text). Meaning, Kikuchi requires determination of a moving distance of each component for moving each component within the movement limit distance to compact the layout.

As previously discussed, the independent claims patentably distinguish over Kikuchi. Further, as Aubel merely discusses manual association of selected circuit instances, Aubel does not cure the deficiencies of Kikuchi regarding the independent claims of the present application.

In particular, Aubel is limited to associating instances with a stack and performing an operation using information identifying the instances as a group (see, col. 6, lines 35-45).

The Examiner acknowledges that Aubel fails to teach "one of a common distance of all components and a unique distance", but relies on Pierrat as teaching the same. However,

Pierrat is limited to applying an adjustment to a phase shift mask pattern and providing predefined proximity adjustments (see, paragraphs 15-24 and 45).

Aubel and/or Pierrat do not teach or suggest indicating "a plurality of components to be collectively arranged in the electronic circuit and a layout distance between two of the plurality of components", where the layout distance between "two of the plurality of components is selectively one of a common distance of all components and a unique distance", as recited in claim 1 (see also, claims 9, 17 and 19).

Even assuming arguendo that Pierrat does disclose the features discussed by the Examiner, the Applicants respectfully submit that there is no motivation to combine the cited references. Specifically, Applicants respectfully traverse the obviousness rejection based on Kikuchi and/or Aubel because there is insufficient evidence for a motivation to modify the Kikuchi for compacting layout by incorporating Aubel or Pierat.

MPEP §2143.01 states that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so. Therefore, as there is no requisite motivation to combine the references cited by the Examiner, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the Examiner's §103 rejections.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, claims depending from the independent claims are patentably distinguishable the cited references. The dependent claims are also independently patentable. For example, as recited in claim 4, "the indication device indicates a plurality of components that are separately arranged in the electronic circuit" and "the display device collectively displays the indicated plurality of components as a component region." The cited references do not teach or suggest these features of claim 4.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

NEW CLAIM:

New claim 20 has been added to recite, that when the indication device indicates "a position in the electronic circuit for arranging the plurality of components, the display device displays the calculated contour of the component region at the indicated position in the electronic circuit on the screen."

Support for features of claim 20 can be found at least on page 14, lines 8-11 and operations 606 and 607 of Fig. 7 in the Specification as filed.

As mentioned above, Kikuchi requires determination of a moving distance of each component, Aubel simply associates instances with a stack and performs an operation using information identifying the instances as a group, and Pierrat only applies an adjustment to a phase shift mask pattern.

None of the cited references, alone or in combination, teach or suggest indicating "a position in the electronic circuit for arranging the plurality of components", where the display device displays "the calculated contour of the component region at the indicated position in the electronic circuit on the screen", as recited in claim 20.

It is submitted that new claim 20 is patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

CONCLUSION:

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

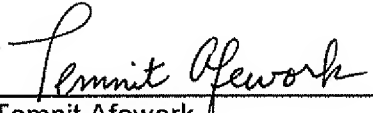
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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